

Fort Strother Army Headquarters, December 15, 1813, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

Fort Strother, December 15, [1813.]

The commanding General cannot avoid the expression of his regret, that at the very moment of meeting his Brethren in arms from East Tennessee his pleasure should be marred and his prospects annihilated by the information that the period of separation is so near. Altho' we are divided by a lofty range of mountains and are generally distinguished by the appellation of East and West Tennesseans yet we are one people bound together by the indissoluble ties of friendship—a reciprocity of wants, freedom of intercourse, and identity of interests; independent of the obligations imposed by the bond of our Union. The Commanding General had fondly anticipated the period when he should have the honor of leading the brave and hardy sons of East, united with their Brethren of West Tennessee into the field.

This period is postponed but it will soon arrive. I know you will teach the cannibals who reveled in the carnage of our unoffending Citizens at Fort Meems that the thunder of our arms is more terrible than the Earth quakes of their Prophets, and that Heaven Dooms to inevitable destruction the wretch who Smiles at the torture he inflicts and who neither spares female innocence, declining age nor helpless infancy. Your commander had supposed that fifteen hundred of your corps were ordered into service for six Months agreeably to a requisition made by the President of the United States on the Gove[r]nor of Tennessee and in conformity with an act of Congress authorising the President of the U. S. to call on the several states for their quotas of 100,000 militia.

Library of Congress

This order I am informed has never been carried into execution and it appears that all the troops now on duty from East Tennessee are only bound for a term of three months service. This term with many has nearly expired and from causes over which the undersigned had no controul we have scarcely penetrated to the heart of the creek nation. We must not relinquish the advantages we have gained. The troops whose term of service will expire in a short time will be honorably discharged. But it is hoped that the same patriotic zeal which stimulated them so promptly and so gravely to encounter all the dangers and privations of this campaign where success has uniformly attended our Army will again illicit your efforts as soon as you are prepared to brave the inclemencies of the season. The commanding General would have lead on the East Tennesseans without delay had there been a probability or even a possibility of maintaining his ground with the small force that will remain after that portion of the troops are discharged whose term of service will shortly expire. But your commander flatters himself that you will unanimously resolve though discharged to return with General Cocke who is ordered into East Tennessee for the purpose of ordering out and marching to this point the fifteen hundred men required by the president to be called out for six months. Having laid the foundation collected and prepared the materials your General is desirous that you should apply the finishing hand to the temple of fame you have begun. Even your children will dwell with rapture on your noble atchievments and a grateful country will not fail to acknowledge and reward your services. I trust I do not appeal to your patriotism in vain. Every young man whose presence is not indispensibly required at home will certainly sieze this opportunity of enrolling his name in the annals of his country. To maintain the posts we have already established requires a considerable force and in addition a sufficient for[ce] must remain to keep open the communication between these posts and protect our transports.